WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

VOL. VII.] SEPTEMBER, 1891. [No. 9.

☞ It will be more convenient if correspondents will address us for the summer months (until September 15th) at "Princeton, N. J." Matter mailed to our usual Philadelphia address will be forwarded.

THE NEW ESCHATOLOGY.

We began this magazine with the conviction that the most pressing need of the Church in our day was a new, a wider, a more rational and scriptural view of the final outcome of God's dealings with mankind. We have been pursuing this end from the first—not, we trust, as an interesting speculation—but as the highest service we could render to the Church and to our fellow-men. For there can be no right knowledge of God if there is a wrong beginning here. It is not too much to say that we believe the end to be in sight, and that the diverging and discordant lines of thought on this subject are at last likely to be soon merged into one.

1. The majority of Christians have long held that the teachings of Scripture require us to believe (1) that man is of an immortal nature; and (2), if he fail of salvation through faith in Christ in this present life, there remains

for him beyond the grave nothing but endless misery and despair.

2. A school of thought, small in the early centuries, but rapidly growing in recent times, denies the first of the above propositions, teaching (1) that man has no eternal life in himself, nor any potency of endless existence, except he become a partaker of the divine nature through union with Christ; and, therefore, (2) the end of all who are not saved in this life is extinction, either—as one wing maintains—at the first death with no resurrection, or, as the larger portion teach, at the second death, after resurrection and final judgment.

3. A small but increasing section of the Church has always maintained that man, as made in the image of God, is truly the Father's child, of an immortal nature, and that every one of His children, by however long and painful a road, must at last be brought home to Himself.

It is needless to say that each one of these views can quote Scripture abundantly in its support.

It must be true also that each one of them has in it some elements of truth; otherwise it could not so long have maintained its hold.

The New Eschatology combines that which is true in each of the systems, and rejects what is false.

THE NATURE OF MAN.

It concedes to the first and third that man is of an immortal nature, in that the root and ground of his being is in God, and that this nature must finally develop into its ideal of an individualized image of God, which is the true and primal idea of man. It affirms, however, that, in its

progress toward this ideal man, it may take on personal forms of being, which are unworthy of its permanent abode. Such personalities acquire a self-consciousness of their own, and to themselves and to others appear to be the real man. So far as any man remains a merely "earthy" and "natural" man, so far his dominant self-consciousness is in the sphere of things temporal, and his personality becomes transient and perishable. The New Eschatology affirms, therefore, with the second of the above systems, that the man who lives only in the natural sphere is mortal, and that his end is destruction. It affirms that this destruction is so radical as to include even the personality of a man who is so sunk in sin that the qualities of his diviner nature, such as truth and love and goodness, remain undeveloped. The recovery of that nature from its bondage in such an earthy manhood must make a break, not in its own individuality, which remained dormant beneath the man's self-consciousness, but in the personal identity of the exterior man beneath which it was submerged. The man, in *that* form and character of manhood, must be destroyed. *There is no other basis for eternal personal continuity of being but the divine nature in man, which is eternal.* So far as that nature pervades and transforms these present personal lives we live in the flesh, so far we can carry over into the life to come their personal traits and endowments. So far as its divine qualities are lacking, these personal existences must perish.

Here, then, we have a doctrine which concedes to orthodoxy that the sinner must suffer an eternal deprivation which is an eternal punishment, and yet refuses its revolting dogma of an endless torment. We have also a doc-

trine that concedes to conditionalism the truth of its position, that there is no immortal life for man apart from God, that there can be no personal continuity of being on any other basis, and that the personal existence of the wicked must come to an end, but denies that this requires the blotting out of that divine ideal manhood which lies at the root of their being, and which becomes specialized in the creation of each individual man. The new doctrine also concedes to universalism that each possessor of the divine-human nature must finally reach the goal of his being, but it affirms that that nature must refuse to carry on with it to that goal any form of personal manhood in which it may have existed which is unfit for its high uses and destiny.

The *individual being* of every man is immortal because its groundwork is divine, but his special form of *personal existence* can be immortalized only as it becomes a true expression of his inmost being, and so a worthy dwelling-place for God. Such a doctrine comprehends the various sides of Scripture truth on this momentous subject, and makes room for every kind of Scripture appeal to the minds and consciences of men, whether drawn from the terrors of the law or the persuasive motives of the gospel.

A RECONCILING STATEMENT.

This magazine has been true to its title in that the doctrine it advocates reconciles and combines in one the chief points of excellence in the various principal theories on the subject of future punishment.

1. It accepts from universalism its doctrine of a divine nature in man, and of the impossibility of the loss or ex-

tinction of this true essence of his being: it must finally reach its true goal of divine manhood.

2. It accepts from orthodoxy its doctrine that only those in whom Christ is formed can see God, and that every form of manhood that is evil must be destroyed from His presence and cast into the fire.

3. It borrows from the conditionalists their view that no form of personal manhood can be immortal but such as becomes a fit habitation for God. It therefore denies with them the possibility of the endless existence in misery of wicked men. "Whose end is destruction."

4. It discriminates, however, between the theory of an immortal soul in every man, which it denies, and an immortal spirit, which it affirms.

5. It derives from St. Paul, and also from the true philosophy of human nature, the doctrine that there is a two-fold self in man. There is the true ego which resides in his immortal and divine nature. There is a surface consciousness which builds up in him another self, related to the external world from which he derives most of his experiences and sensations. Living in this sphere he develops a personality suited to it, and which is "of the world."

6. What must be destroyed in God's consuming fire is his personality, so far as the truer self, the diviner nature, has not penetrated and sanctified it. It is a life endowment whose treasures must all be left behind, except as these treasures have been "laid up in heaven."

7. From this point of view we can see how a man can be both destroyed and saved, lost and found, dead and made alive again. We can see how in his existing form of personal being he can be consumed in fire which can-

not be quenched, and how in another he may be "saved so as by fire." All is explained by the doctrine of a two-fold personality in the one individual, and by the principle that personal continuity of being, surviving death, inheres alone in the divine nature of man, and that, therefore, he recovers self-consciousness and the treasures of his present life, only as he has developed those elements of character which are divine, such as truth and goodness, and as that life has been pervaded by the Spirit of God.

If the case of the rich man in hell occurs to any one as refuting this view, we would ask him to consider that the Dives seen in that parable was still undergoing that process of destruction to which Jesus alludes in Matthew x, 24, where He says: "Fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell." The selfish personality known as Dives could certainly never have been saved. But there was a better nature even in him, a gleam of which showed itself in his solicitude for his five brethren, which could serve as the groundwork of another personality into which this nature might develop, and make for itself a more congenial abode.

SALVATION BY GRACE.

The special exponent among New Testament writers, of the doctrine of salvation by grace, is St. Paul. It is a common impression that the chief thing in his mind, in speaking of this grace, is the display of God's mercy in the forgiveness of sins. This is not borne out by a study of the passages. The principal features of this grace to which he gives prominence are these two: The grace of

God in the gift of Christ is shown, first, in the redemption of our lives from death, the wages of sin; and, secondly, in the impartation to us of a new spirit of life from Christ, in the power of which we are justified—that is, made inwardly righteous, and enabled to walk in newness of life.

This is shown in that summary passage, Rom. vi, 23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is the way in which he sums up the argument of the previous chapters which treat of justification by faith. He has not been speaking of a way provided by which men can escape paying down these wages of sin. It is not exemption from a legal penalty that is in view. On the contrary, he had argued that the penalty had not only been pronounced but was being executed upon all mankind. "Death passed upon all men" (v. 12). This is equally true, whether we regard the death spoken of as a moral or a physical degradation. If the death be "in trespasses and sins," then this moral death had passed upon all men, for all had sinned. Or, if it be viewed as that bodily dissolution which is the fruit of indwelling depravity—death, in this sense, reigned over all mankind. But the grace of God had provided a way, not for the setting aside of this well-deserved penalty, but for the rescue and renovation of man's nature beyond it. The blood of Christ was not shed for the remission of sin's penalties, but for the putting away of the sins which make penalty necessary. This was the marvel of redemption, that, beyond the death which man must necessarily suffer, God could provide for him another life. And this life, as com-

ing from a new source—the divine and glorified humanity of Jesus—was able to quicken men, both from their death in trespasses and sins and from the grave into which they must go down and see corruption. This was, therefore, a salvation *beyond* judgment and penalty, and not *from* judgment. So far from being an exemption, the believer in Christ is constantly viewed as one who accepts this judgment against himself, not as one who hopes to escape it. He freely surrenders his old man of sin, his Adamic nature, to this just judgment of God. He is told not only that death must do its appointed work upon him in that character, but that his progress in salvation and growth into the new life of righteousness which cannot die, depends upon his thus confessing judgment against his old and sinful self, and in submitting to its mortification or putting to death. He is to bear about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in him.

"Salvation by grace" has generally been regarded as escape from some unspeakable doom threatened against us in the future. But the Scriptures view man as now suffering and staggering under the doom of sin, as dead in sin, and as bound over to death, which is its wages. And salvation is the gracious lifting of man to a new life above this region of death and penalty (Eph. ii, 2–8; Titus ii, 11–15; iii, 4–7). But it is a lifting of him up only so far as he is made a new man in Christ Jesus. In his character as a mere man of nature, the old or natural man, the penalty proceeds to do its full work upon him. In that character he must die and suffer eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord.

When men come to rightly understand what it is to be "saved by grace;" that it is not the result of any scheme for buying us off from the just and proper penalties of our sins, but for giving us a new gift and trial of life beyond these penalties, then they can more readily understand how this grace of God bringeth salvation unto all men (Titus ii, 11, R. V.; I Tim. ii, 6). This grace must be to all or it could be to none. As "the judgment came upon all men to condemnation, the free gift must come upon all men to justification of life" (Rom. v, 18). "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ must all be made alive" (I Cor. xv, 22). But they will understand also that there must be discrimination in this quickening out of death to a new life. In some men the submission to the death penalty for sin is a voluntary experience in this present earthly life. And the quickening consequently begins here. And the resurrection beyond must be of a character which shall gather up the good fruits of this new life. It must be "of life." While in the case of others, the process of judgment, which they rebelled against and refused, must eventuate in their being stripped by death of all the fruits and treasures of this present life. Their resurrection must be one "of judgment." And yet the fact that they are raised at all will be a salvation by grace, not indeed of the former man dissolved in death, but of that germ of divine humanity which is the root of being in every man in virtue of the fact that humanity is headed up in the Son of Man. That ideal man in every man must finally take on the perfect image of God, although it can carry on to that high goal only those elements of our personal being in this life which have been controlled and transformed by the Spirit of God.

THE HIDDEN MYSTERY.

In Colossians i, 25–27, St. Paul writes of a certain mystery "hidden from the ages and the generations," but now made manifest to the saints, which he defines as "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Every New Testament reader will observe how much is made in its teaching of this fact of Christ in us, as both the cause and the method of our salvation. This was one of the primary truths He taught to His disciples, and which He especially prayed that His Father would make real to them and in them. He had told them that the Comforter, whom He was to send to them from the Father, would especially reveal to them this fact: "I am in my Father, and ye in me and I in you." And His final prayer for them was that "they all may be one as thou Father art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us."

It is manifest that the knowledge that Christ lived in him was the inspiration of Paul's life, his strength for service, his defence against enemies, human and devilish, his support under trial, his buoyant hope in every night of adversity, his victory over death. It was in him a new power of life as well as the hope of glory. One of the most conspicuous proofs of this power of Christ in him was the way in which he was enabled to triumph over bodily infirmities, to endure incredible hardships, and to show prodigious industry in planning and toiling for Christ and for men.

The whole power of our salvation resides in the development of a God-consciousness in man. As made in

the image of God we have the germ of this consciousness within us. But it was not until Christ came that this God-consciousness found its supreme and rightful expression in humanity. God was manifest in the flesh. Human nature reached in Him its divine ideal as the image—the Son and heir of God—and was enthroned at His right hand as the Quickener and Source of this divine humanity in us. And we get power to be and to act as sons through believing on Him as thus raising up and sustaining in us the consciousness that we are one with God, and one with Him in that divine-human nature in which God has chosen to dwell and to act. It is impossible for the Christian to make any progress in working out his own salvation, or to do any effective work for the Church or for his fellowmen, except as this hidden mystery becomes revealed to his own consciousness and becomes operative and energetic to control his life and conduct. The cause of all the painful deficiencies in our Christian living and in the Church as a body is that this long-hidden mystery becomes again shrouded in us. We do not half believe it. We allow it to be smothered under a mass of worldly ideas, and a load of worldly cares, until its power becomes latent, and we falsely strive to go on in the Christian life in our merely human and natural energy, imitating the fruits of the Spirit in works of the flesh, worshiping with strange fire, and going through the round of Christian observances and duties in the energy of the old man, covering up its weariness and disgust with a veil of hypocrisy, or perhaps giving up the effort as one for which we have no longer the ability nor the inclination.

The one thing, therefore, we need to carry us through the

daily trials and duties of the Christian life, to strengthen our bodies for the burden, and to brace up our spirits to the task until all Christian service shall be a pleasure, and even the necessary afflictions and self-denials of the Christian life shall be cheerfully borne, is that we shall not suffer this consciousness of union with God and of our divine sonship to grow dim within us. This is the bed-rock of our faith and of our standing in Christ. We must keep our feet upon it as for our life. This Christ-nature in us is always spoken of as a growth. It is first "begotten," then "formed" in us. It first dominates our spirits, then it controls our bodies, until their members become its willing instruments and the whole organism its temple. Nothing but this consciousness that we are Christly men, with divine power, and all the capacities of a divine nature latent in us, will ever give us confidence and success in the Christian life. And with this all things become possible.

The greatest want in our lives, the greatest need of the Church and of the world is that this mystery shall be made manifest in us and to all men, until, no longer hidden and pent-up, it becomes a mighty, transforming energy that shall subdue all things in us, in the Church, and in the world unto itself.

HINDU PHILOSOPHY.—Sir Monier Williams, in his *Religious Thought and Life in India* (page 27), describes some of the features of that ancient faith, as follows:

"Most Hindu philosophers agree that spirit is eternal, both retrospectively and prospectively. The Spirit of God

and the spirit of man must have existed and must continue to exist from all eternity. The two spirits are not really distinct—so says the Vedantist. The living spirit of man —the human Self—is identical with God's Spirit. It is that Spirit limited and personalized by the power of Illusion. (By this he means the phenomena of the external world.—Ed.) The life of every living spirit is nothing but an infinitesimal arc of the one endless circle of infinite existence. . . . The spirit cannot exercise perception, consciousness, thought, or will unless joined to mind, and invested with a bodily covering or vehicle.

"And of actual bodily coverings there are two: first, the subtle body which encloses a portion of the universal spirit in a kind of subtle or tenuous envelope, constituting it a living individual personal soul, and carrying it through all its corporeal migrations till its final reunion with its source; secondly, the gross body which surrounds the spirit's subtle vehicle, and is of various forms in the various stages and conditions of existence."

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

By Rev. L. C. Baker, Editor of "Words of Reconciliation," Philadelphia, Pa.

(From the London *Free Christian.*)

The human race is to attain its final blessedness on the earth through the revelation to it of the knowledge of God. Mankind is now in ignorance of God; hence its sin and misery. God made man with the capacity and desire for this knowledge, and by it he was to attain to eternal life. But before he should reach this high goal, his Creator and Father suffered him to pursue this knowl-

edge along self-chosen paths. He has been allowed to seek to satisfy himself with things of sense in order that he might learn that God was his only portion, and to taste the bitterness of death in order that he might learn that God is his only true and abiding life.

THE NATURE OF MAN.

In deciding the question which is so much mooted in our times, as to whether man is of an immortal nature, it is necessary to distinguish between what he is in essence and in manifestation. The root and ground of his being is in God. He is, therefore, of an immortal essence. This core of his being is his true and inmost self, and it cannot die. But the personal form in which it seeks expression may be unworthy of it, and therefore not abiding. The exterior man, the personality known to us, and which acquires a self-consciousness of its own, insomuch that it becomes the character in which the man thinks of and knows himself, may die; indeed, it must die, because it is only a false representation, a counterfeit expression of the man's true and hidden self. Of these two "I's" the awakened soul becomes conscious, and aware that the one must die in order that the other may rise into life eternal.

Reconciliation between the two theories of man's nature must therefore be sought in this distinction between that in man which is individual and that which is personal. As made in the divine image and as being of a divine nature, he must finally reach the end of his creation and become individualized as a son and heir of God. But in the passage to this high destiny he may take on personal

forms of being which are imperfect and transitory. The constant teaching of the Bible, that the end of the wicked is destruction, will therefore find its explanation in this inevitable destruction of these imperfect and perishable forms of being which are but the outward man within which the true being of man is encased. In that class of men which we call "the wicked," this exterior man has so usurped and imprisoned the inward man as to suppress its activities and aspirations and even its self-consciousness. A phantom self has displaced the true. Hence Jesus warns men that, in the inevitable destruction of this body of sin and death, they will be in danger of "losing themselves." We can well conceive it to be possible that a man's personal self-consciousness may be so developed in the line of that which is temporal and evil that, when stripped and dissolved by death, the loss of this evil personality will carry with it the loss of self-consciousness. The man, in the character in which he was known even to himself, is destroyed.

Now, as all men are born into the world under these conditions of bondage to that which is external and corruptible, it must be said of all men that they are mortal. They die and return to dust, and even their thoughts perish. There can be no absolute extinction of their essential being, and no loss of its accumulated good, but that form of manhood in which this being sought personal expression perishes.

Here, then, we come abreast of certain important principles. These are that God is building up in man a temple in which He may dwell forever, that man is not immortal in his own nature, but becomes so as he becomes a fit

dwelling-place for God, that the process of salvation is a process of purgation from all the corruptible elements which have been temporarily wrought into this temple, or that may have been accessories in its construction. The further principle is brought to view, that personal continuity of being is made dependent upon character. So far as there is wrought into the fabric of any human life the elements of truth and goodness and virtue, so far there is the basis of a personality that will survive the shock and change of death. They that have done good—and this refers not to Christians alone—come forth unto the resurrection of life; they that have done evil have a resurrection also: the root of their being cannot perish, but all of evil that has been grafted on to it and sought nourishment from it will have been cast into the fire and burned. This is the resurrection of judgment.

RESURRECTION REDEMPTIVE.

If there is any well-established principle of Scripture, it is that resurrection is redemptive. As the wages of sin is death, resurrection necessarily lies at the other pole of the divine dealing. It can never be retributive, although it may be attended with this retributive excision from the stock of any human life of all its evil growth. It is just at this point that the traditional theology has long labored under a fatal mistake. It has falsely conceived of resurrection as bringing to the unjust an endoubled damnation. It has thus put a veil over the whole of the Old Testament teachings, and has obscured and perverted the first principle of the gospel of Christ. It was at this point that the writer, who was for a long time in the ministry of

the Presbyterian Church, was compelled to break with the Westminster Confession. This standard makes the resurrection of the unjust, which the Bible includes under its category of hope for the dead, and which St. Paul embraces in his "hope toward God" (Acts xxiv, 15) to be an inconceivable disaster, an infinite curse. The fundamental promise of redemption, that in a chosen seed all the families of the earth are to be blessed, is thus nullified by the exclusion of the unjust dead who constitute the major part of the "all," and by the denial that the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to be Lord both of the dead and the living had any purpose of blessing toward this immense portion of the dead.

These principles reveal to us also the fundamental fallacy upon which the long-received dogma of

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

is based. The fallacy lies in the confounding of that indestructible self which lies at the root of man's being as derived from God, and which is imperishable, with that evil personality which is "yet of the world," because it has grown up in its environment and under bondage to its corruption. This must be destroyed in God's consuming fire. But to suppose it capable of eternal existence in the torment of that fire is to attribute to it the nature of God, who only hath immortality. Men become immortal only as they become partakers in, and habitations of, the divine nature. There is no possible form of eternal being but that which is of God. The problem of salvation is to build up man into that form of personal being in which he shall embody the life of God and be His representative,

with all the prerogatives of sovereignty and sonship, throughout his wide dominions. To conceive of any baser form of manhood as immortal is to misconceive the whole plan of creation and redemption.

From the right point of view eternal torment, or the endless being of any class of creatures rebellious and at enmity with God, is inconceivable. He must reconcile all things unto Himself and become all in all.

In association with this cruel and false dogma of eternal torment there has also grown up in the Church a false view of

THE ATONEMENT.

It is conceived of as a divine scheme for rescuing man from this awful penalty of an endless hell. Hence men have come to view it as a device by which they can escape the just consequences of their sins. The atonement of Christ makes no provision for the remission of sin's penalties. Under the divine government no penalties are inflicted but such as the case demands, and are perfectly just and good. None therefore can be remitted. What is remitted are not penalties, but the sins which make penalty necessary. No man escapes the consequences of his sins except as he is enabled, through the life of Christ, operative in him, to put away his sins. The energy of that life will require that in the end the whole evil nature in man be surrendered to death. Even the Christian must pay down this wage of sin. Man's redemption consists in the fact that, in the energy of this Christ-life, he is brought safely through this crisis of death into the life eternal which lies beyond it. He is thus saved, not *from* sin's

penalty, but *through* it, not *from* judgment for sin, but through it and beyond it.

And this shows how it is possible that salvation may reach those who are not in this life reached and saved through the knowledge of Christ, whom to know is eternal life.

The common mistake of those who hold to a theory of

FUTURE PROBATION

is that they locate it in some supposed intermediate state *before* final death and judgment. Whereas it is only after the sentence of death has been visited and judgment executed that there is any room for the grace of God to again take up the case of lost man. It is for this reason that the advocates of eternal punishment or of annihilation find it so easy to defeat the future probationist from Scripture. The passages are so frequent and decisive in the assertion that judgment must follow upon the issues of this life that no ground is left for future hope except it be *beyond* judgment. If this judgment be to endless suffering, of course the case is settled. But as it is a consignment to death and destruction, the way is open to inquire whether there is any provision for the recovery of the sinner out of death and after judgment. By placing our hope for him here, we avoid all the ordinary objections to the doctrine of a future probation. This second gift of life is not a revival of the same life which was lost, nor is it another trial of the same personality. These have been consigned to destruction. But it is a re-investiture with manhood of the divine and essential nature which was the root of being in the former man. It would be wrong,

therefore, to speak of this as a second probation. The first chapter of the man's life is closed in judgment never to be re-opened. The second chapter will have its own experience and issues.

ONE ORGANISM.

There remains another important principle underlying this whole subject. It is that the human race is so constituted that the living and the dead are bound together in one organism. It may reasonably be asked, how is it that around the core of this divine nature in man there can be accumulated all these accretions of an evil life until the false conceals the true? It is because in the constitution of the world its Creator, for His own wise and good ends, has loaded the advancing forms of life with the burdens of the past, in order that they might lift up the lower forms. Man, standing at the head of all the lower forms of created life, must still inherit from them their bondage to corruption, so that in his deliverance into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God they might be delivered. And so with the generations of mankind. They each inherit the infirmities and evils of those that preceded them, so that, in bearing their iniquities, they may also work out their deliverance. Each human being comes into the world loaded with this heritage of evils from the past. And not only so; his life becomes a receptacle for their vanished lives. There is every reason to believe that the disembodied spirits of these dead, instead of being shut up in an unknown hades, are held in being through connection with the living generation of men who are still fighting on the arena of this present life. Each living man is the organic centre of a whole group of those who have here

fought and failed. They furnish the materials for that fabric of evil personality into which so many human lives develop.

But if this law of heredity and transmission of life and character brings evil to the race, it is still more potent for blessing. For by it blessings are transmitted backward as well as curses forward. The just and good man who triumphs over the evils of life—and especially if Christ, the great conqueror in this race-battle be formed in him—wins blessing not only for himself but for those who went before him. Every good man becomes thus a saviour of his fellow-men. Or rather, Christ in him and through him carries on His work of saving the world. This explains why so much stress is laid in the Old Testament upon the doctrine of redemption through a seed, and why the doctrine of election is so prominent in the New Testament. No more serious mistake in theology can be made than to suppose that God's mercy in salvation terminates upon the elect. They are chosen as a first-born company in order that through them His mercy may reach the later born. These elect fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ, and are even now with Him being baptized for the dead. That is, what they endure and suffer in their present conflict against sin and the world inures to the benefit of the dead and helps to achieve their deliverance. Each victor in this world-long conflict carries with him a train of captives, who are by him set free. The elect are therefore even now kings and priests unto God.

We are not to suppose, however, that this priestly work of the saints is all done this side of the grave. The saints

are the only class of men who rise beyond death into the energies and prerogatives of that divine manhood of which Jesus is the head. However some of them who were imperfect may still be held in that state which the New Testament defines as sleep, it is certain that such of them as, like Paul, have fought the good fight and finished their course, already live and reign with Christ. And these, under Him, carry on now the work of salvation. We who are still warring in the flesh are surrounded and helped in unknown and wondrous ways by these ministers of God. This is their blessed occupation. From this point of view heaven and hell are seen to be much nearer to us than we have hitherto imagined. The denizens of these unseen worlds become co-partners with those of us who are still fighting the battle of life on the arena of this present world. The imperfect dead obtain release only as the living take up their lost cause and carry it on to victory. The processes of human life going on around us are seen to be charged with the interests and destiny, not only of the living, but of the dead who have gone before us. These processes become the methods by which God is working out the issues both of retribution and salvation, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, and awarding to every one of us according to our works.

It only remains to assert that we have here a version of the Gospel for which the heathen world is waiting, before its masses can ever be won to the obedience of the faith which is in Christ Jesus. What they need is a revelation of the word of God which shall explain to them the enigma of this present human life in such a way as shall

preserve that identity of interest between the living and the dead which God has put into the constitution of the race, and which shall disclose to them that hope for the dead which is of the very essence of the Gospel of Christ, and which has been long hidden from the eyes of even the Church. No Gospel will ever win the heathen which fixes an impassable gulf of despair between them and their ancestral dead, whose lives they look upon as continued in themselves. While a Gospel which would call them into fellowship with Christ's sufferings and death, not only as a way of salvation for themselves, but as a baptism for their kindred dead, would at once light up for them the dark problem of the world with a great light out of heaven, and bring to them that "hope toward God" for which they have long been waiting in weariness and gloom.

It has been impossible in so brief an outline of views covering so large a field to indicate the passages of Scripture, or the general principles of interpretation, relied upon for proof. All that I could do was to give the results rather than the processes of my thinking on these momentous themes.

GROWTH.—"Many persons have been revising their personal creeds, not only in this country, but in all countries. People without communicating much with one another, have become aware of this, and they are also aware that the personal belief of a very large number of people is larger, broader, higher, and deeper than the long-accepted formularies of the Church.

"When is this growth going to stop? Not till we all

come in the unity of faith to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. There is not an iron-bound creed in the world that will stand the slow, even, all-around, tremendous pressure of live thought. It is the thought and the work of foreign missions swelling within the heart of the Church that is splitting it asunder. Somehow our creeds must be adapted to the universal offer of salvation. Certain opinions have been for a long time forming in the heart of the Church, looking to wider and grander things than the creeds contemplate. Opinions are like powerful explosive gases, harmless if you give them opportunity to expand; dangerous if you confine them. Give them plenty of manholes and leave them open and there is no danger. We have not had a sufficient number of manholes in our creed, or if we have, some one has closed them and we are liable to be blown to pieces.

"But, instead of being alarmed at the state of things, we should rejoice. It is but the progress toward a higher, sweeter, purer faith. The man of to-day does not think and feel as the man of the sixteenth century. John Calvin, in his most martinet moments, never dreamed that he was able to give the limits to all religious thought to the end of the world, and that no man was ever to think outside of his statements. We have come to a sprouting time. The tree of the Church is swelling in all its buds and breaking into flowers and beauty, but the trunk is the same, only stronger and larger. Nothing that is true is going to be hurt in all this investigation. The Church has gone through such times again and again, and the heresy of one age has become the orthoxody of the next."—*Rev. S. B. Rossiter, D. D., in New York Tribune.*

It is far better that a man should be inconsistent with himself than that he should go on defending views of truth he has been advocating, and to which he may have committed himself in books and tracts, but which he has now outgrown. St. Augustine has set a noble example of this kind of self-abandonment in his *Retractiones.*

Nothing is so dangerous as religious sentiment without truth in the inward parts. Certain attempts at what is called conversion are but writhings of the passion of self-recommendation; gapings of the greed of power over others; swellings of the ambition to propagate one's own creed and proselytize victoriously; hungerings to see self reflected in another convinced. In such efforts lie dangers as vulgar as the minds that make them, and love the excitement of them.—*Geo. Macdonald.*

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

A Reprint.—A few weeks since the editor of the London *Free Christian* invited us to contribute a statement of the views we advocate to his journal. A number of writers of differing schools of thought were asked to do the same thing, in order that the grave problems of theology and of human destiny might be viewed from many sides.

The editor speaks of the latter portion of the article as "very specially welcome." An English clergyman has also written to us expressing approval of the article, especially in its view of resurrection as redemptive and of the solidarity of the race in sin and redemption. As a condensed statement of our views, we reproduce the article in this present number.

Views of Professor Stearns.—At the International Council of Congregationalists, recently held in London, the Rev. L. F.

Stearns, D. D., Professor in Bangor Theological Seminary, read a paper upon the "Present Direction of Theological Thought in America." This gentleman about a year ago declined an election to the Chair of Theology in Union Theological Seminary, New York City. It is an open secret that the cause of his refusal was his unwillingness to subscribe the pledge of fidelity to the Westminster Confession. Although urged by the Union Professors to accept it, as did they, for "substance of doctrine," his conscience in the matter was more sensitive than theirs. It is, therefore, with some interest that we read the address referred to, from which we present this extract:

"The old Calvinism, which our fathers loyally accepted, left a part of mankind wholly out of reach of Christ's redemptive grace. When the New England theology broke the iron ring of this consistent and logical system by the adoption of the doctrine of a universal atonement, it was inevitable that new questions should arise.

"During the last decade we have been discussing, as the world pretty well knows, the relation of the heathen to God's grace in Christ. The old view, which prevailed during the last century, and had many advocates until quite recent times, doomed the heathen as a mass to perdition. This severe doctrine has been generally abandoned. Our discussions have not been upon this point, but upon the question as to the manner and grounds of the salvation of those heathen who are saved. The common view has been that their imperfect faith, based upon their natural knowledge of God and of such elements of truth as are found in their corrupt religions, is reckoned to them for righteousness for the sake of Christ who gave Himself a ransom for all, and that so their eternal destiny is settled on the basis of the decisions of this life. The able and devoted teachers in our beloved mother theological seminary at Andover have urged the other view, common in Germany, that an opportunity is granted the heathen in the other life, between death and the judgment, to hear the Gospel and accept or reject Christ. I do not propose to enter into the merits of our controversy. So far as it has involved unchristian bitterness, we are ashamed of it. We are hard fighters on our side of the water, and both parties have dealt heavy blows. The result of the discussion has been to emphasize the silence of the Scriptures on this subject. The majority still hold the older view, because it seems to us more in accord with the general drift of the Scripture and the principles of our New England theology. But there is

an increasing willingness to admit that our speculations cannot exhaust the possibilities of God's redemptive grace, and that a point of this sort can never permanently be made a test of orthodoxy.

"The much more difficult question of future punishment has not been the subject of important controversy among us. But it has profoundly affected us. Our deeper conception of Christianity, our enlarged view of the infinite love and mercy of God, our stronger realization of the power of Christ's redemption, have united to give this subject a peculiar painfulness and solemnity. It has pressed not only upon our theologians, but upon all our thoughtful men and women. It is a subject of peculiar difficulty to many of our most promising students of divinity. Some among us find relief in the theories of the 'larger hope' and 'conditional immortality.' If the greater number continue to hold in substance the immemorial doctrine of the Christian Church, it is because we cannot convince ourselves that the words of Christ and his Apostles, fairly interpreted, sanction any other view. It is with us a matter of loyalty to our Master, whose word is our final authority. Our difficulties and perplexities we cast on Him, and leave Him to show us at the last day how this awful fact is consonant with love and justice."

These remarks reveal a mind strongly impelled toward the wider hope, and yet one that has not yet found the firm ground which Scripture supplies for it in the gospel of the resurrection.

Eternal Loss.—A writer in the *Free Christian*, who adopts the orthodox view of future punishment, prefers the theory of "Conditional Immortality" to that of "Restoration," because it "does not reject the notion of an eternal element in the destiny of the lost."

If this writer could see the truth of a two-fold personality in man—a self which pertains to the divine element in his being, and which, because it is immortal, must finally reach the goal of perfect manhood, and a self which pertains to the outward man, and which takes on a personality suited to this present world, he would see that there is truth in both these theories, and that neither is a statement of the whole truth. The end of this natural or fleshly man is eternal destruction, except so far as the personality pertaining to it has been appropriated and transformed by the

divine nature which is the root of being in every man, and which, in the unregenerate, remains only a sub-conscious self, but becomes the dominant self in the Christian. The "eternal element" in the loss of the ungodly is, therefore, the eternal loss of the things they counted dear to them in this present life—a loss which, in the case of imbruted sinners, may carry with it such a loss of self-consciousness as will amount to a break in personal identity. All this we may suppose, without supposing that the deeper self, the ideal of the divine image in every man, can ever be lost, or fail of being ultimately realized.

The Christian Union, in speaking of the closing discourse of Mr. Moody at the Northfield Conference, has these wise and discriminating words to say concerning the difference between sensational Second Adventism and that patient waiting for Christ which the New Testament so constantly urges upon us:

"The Second Adventism which cries, 'Lo here' and 'Lo there,' and which insists that the kingdom of God comes with observation, and against which Christ warned His followers, is not that represented in the sober faith and serious expectancy of such preachers as Spurgeon and Moody, or such scholars and exegetes as Alford and Meyer. A faith which inspires such enthusiasm and fidelity on the one hand, and is based on so patient and painstaking a study of the Scriptures on the other, cannot be airily dismissed with the sensuous visions of the Millerites, as a fanaticism undeserving serious consideration. If it is an illusive hope, its illusiveness should be exposed. If, on the contrary, it is a well-grounded hope, if the Church has set its face too much toward the past and too little toward the future, if it has ceased to watch, if it says cavalierly, 'Where is the promise of His coming, for all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation?' if it has substituted a pathetic love for a defeated and dead Lord in place of an enthusiastic faith in a Lord who is living and victorious, the ministry has a duty of reawakening, first its own hope, and then the hope, and so the watchful expectancy of the now drowsy and indifferent, if not despairing Church.

"The real question, then, for the serious-minded religious teacher to consider, is not the spectacular prophecies of the so-called Second Adventists, but whether the manger and the Cross constitute the final revelation of God to man; whether the Incarnation and the Passion are the last word which God has to utter to hu-

manity; whether the Divine love is to conquer the world by the instruments and methods which we now see in operation. Or whether the New Testament is to prepare for a future revelation, as the Old Testament prepared for that of the New—a revelation the nature of which the devout Christian can as little comprehend as could the devout Jew of Isaiah's time comprehend that which was ushered in on the first Christmas morn.

"In our judgment the answer to this question given by the New Testament is not ambiguous. That book is as truly prophetic as the Old Testament, and abundantly justifies the hope of the future expressed with such sobriety by Mr. Moody."

"ORTHOXODY AND LIBERTY."—From "Topics for the Time" in the August *Century* we extract the following:

"Never in our generation, perhaps never in America, were questions of creed and of Church discipline cropping out in so many new ways, places, and humors as at this moment. Creed revision, accusations of 'unsoundness,' or actual heresy, discussions in the pulpit, and in the so-called religious and so-called secular press, are with us continually. It is idle to say that the whole matter is a specialty, and that the opinion only of specialists is of any account. Matters of religion are vital to every soul, and the pew as well as the pulpit must make up its mind—the priest and the layman, the scholarly and the unscholarly. We must all know and do something about it; we cannot, at the very least, help thinking about it; and we cannot be altogether blamed if we sometimes 'think out loud.'

"Now this matter of thinking brings us straight to a point which some of those in ecclesiastical or official place seem sometimes to lose sight of. The modern world is too much in the habit of doing its own thinking to look without amazement at any apparent effort to put a stop to this highly sane and sanitary habit of the human mind. If it should get to be understood that in any branch of learning, in any historical, philosophical, moral, or religious system, in any society or group of scholars, or teachers, or preachers, fearless and unbiased investigation, and the frank acceptance of the results of such investigation—in other words, honest, earnest, and independent thinking—was at a discount, was, in fact, to be peremptorily and hopelessly and forever limited by some fixed and ancient formula, why, then there would arise a suspicion of—shall we say a contempt for?—that system, or that group which would militate against its intellectual and moral influence to an extent beyond all computation. . . .

"There are minds that do not wish to do their own thinking, that are happiest when utterly relieved of that duty; but there are others—and in the modern world the number is increasing—who can no more cease to think than they can cease to breathe. It would be moral and intellectual death in the first place as surely as physical death in the second. The motto, 'Leave thought behind all ye who enter here' over the door of any church or any institution of learning—what would be the effect, think you of such a motto, upon the young, curious, active, and earnest minds of this generation? And it is just such minds that are needed now no less imperatively than at any former epoch to carry on the work, not only of evangelizing the world but of Christianizing Christendom."

THE *New York Observer* of July 23d, says:

"President F. L. Patton, of Princeton College, preached last Sunday in Rev. Dr. W. Merle Smith's pulpit in the Central Church, this city. In the course of his discourse Dr, Patton made this statement: 'I believe that a man may be bad and wicked all his life and yet be saved by accepting at his last moment the idea of salvation through the Son and putting all his faith therein. God looks less at the character of a man than at his simplicity of faith.'"

It would perhaps be unfair to Dr. Patton to criticise this statement without an opportunity of examining the whole sermon from which it is an extract. But we may at least criticise it as adopted and given currency to by the *Observer* as if it were true gospel. We have had of late so many deplorable instances of the effects upon men of the kind of preaching which depreciates character and makes faith to be a substitute for it, that we are compelled to speak out against the danger. The *Observer* ought to know that, in the sight of God and according to Scripture, righteous character is salvation, and that there is no such thing as salvation without it, and that the "simplicity of faith" is of value in God's sight, only because it is the necessary beginning of right moral conduct and of renovated character. Such preaching is therefore misleading and dangerous, unless it be balanced by such a description of the saved man as we have in Psalm xxiv: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy

place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his eyes unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation."

REVIEW.—We are indebted to Mr. W. G. Moncrieff, of London, Ontario, for a copy of his pamphlet of 147 pages, published by the Taylor Austin Co., of Cleveland, Ohio, and entitled, *Future Probation: Is it awaiting any of the unrighteous?*

This essay seems to have been called forth by a desire on the author's part to refute our doctrine of the redemptive character of resurrection. It refers at the outset to the article in one of the early issues of this magazine on "The Resurrection of Judgment," which is incorporated also into our book on the "The Fire of God's Anger," and quotes from it throughout as "the latest exhibition" of a "new scheme in theology."

Mr. Moncrieff has been known for a long time as an able and industrious advocate of the doctrine that the wicked are to find their eternal punishment in being eternally destroyed. What phase of truth there is in this doctrine we have elsewhere explained. But he is not staggered by any of the difficulties his doctrine presents, nor has he any sympathy with those of us who, while acknowledging the strength of his position, see that it must be adjusted to sundry other truths in God's Word, before we can have a complete and satisfying doctrine. He sees no incongruity in the fact that, in a divine system of the world, there should be such an enormous waste in this mass of human lives which, he tells us, come to nothing, no ray of hope in that provision of redemption which insures their resurrection from the dead, no inconsistency in their double judgment—at the first death and the second—no higher purpose in their resurrection and second judgment than to repeat with greater horrors the death already visited upon them, and no room for any of these countless masses in that wide horizon of hope which Scripture in its very first book is so careful to open before us in the repeated promise that in a chosen seed all the families of the earth were to be blessed. In his view these dead can be no part of the "all."

Our readers are generally familiar with the class of Scripture passages upon which these brethren rely to sustain their views. We have never denied the force of these passages. But we have insisted, and still insist, that no meaning of them can be accepted, or tolerated, which requires one to deny a fundamental principle in God's whole plan of creation and redemption, namely, that, while the taking away of life is privative, its restoration must be a gracious act and a blessing.

In our earlier expositions of this great truth, as in the article "Resurrection of Judgment," we were rather feeling our way to the fuller convictions we now have upon it. It was therefore easier for Mr. Moncrieff to find hooks to hang his objections upon than he would find it if he had read more carefully our later statements. For instance, in defining the "resurrection of judgment" we now refer the term "judgment" to the fact, that death has stripped from those raised the accumulations of their former sinful lives, rather than to a process of discipline through which they must pass after resurrection. The "judgment" consists in the loss of the whole former fabric of such a life, so far as it was evil, even to the loss of personal identity. Such a view leaves all that is penal in God's dealings with men under the category of death, where it properly belongs, and at the same time leaves us free to estimate resurrection at its true value, as always redemptive.

Heaven and Hell in Man.—Dr. Lyman Abbott, in the *Christian Union*, says finely:

"We are coming to see that penalty is not external penalty inflicted by a governor for crime perpetrated. The law is in ourselves; the disease and disorder are in ourselves; and the penalty is in ourselves. We are coming to see that every sin comes back to plague the sinner. Every man flagellates himself. No God in heaven nor devil in hell is needed to kindle the fire that is not quenched or to breed the worm that dieth not. Every man kindles the fire and breeds the worm in his own soul. This is not new. The old Greek tragedians saw it and wrought it into their tragedies. Dante saw it and repeated it in the story of the *Inferno*. Shakespeare saw it and revealed it in 'Macbeth' and 'Othello.' Browning and Tennyson have seen and interpreted it."